1:Stanford U. S-4, 5 1956 AF12 North China AF12

than two or three generations.[2] These conditions accounted for the lack of a permanent ruling caste in China. There are definite ideals in traditional Chinese culture which conditioned the upward and downward mobility of the people within the social hierarchy.

B. Social Mobility

The Family Ideal. Large families, especially of the extended type, were the ideal in China.[3] However, in practice, the ideal was limited by matters of economics. Primogeniture in China had been done away with long before the Manchu Dynasty (1644-1912). Land was divided equally among sons. After successive divisions individual holdings became infinitesimally small. This contributed to the decline of the economic status of even the wealthiest families, particularly when land was the sole source of income.[4]

2. Martin Yang, A Chinese Village, New York, 1945, p. 132; Francis Hsu, Under the Ancestor's Shadow, New York, Columbia University Press, 1948, p. 4.

3. Consult the chapter on The Family.

4. "In the matter of inheritance, the general pattern observed for poor agriculturalists holds very well for the merchant group. Just as at the death of a farmer, there is a sharing of the property. In the agricultural situation, however, there seems to be greater fragmentation of the legacy, each son working his share more or less independently and with a minimum of combination. In the merchant situation there is somewhat more cohesion among the heirs, who often work the inherited enterprise as partners." Morton H. Fried, Fabric of Chinese Society, New York, 1953 p. 52.

On the other hand, because of the existence of extended families and the clan structure, less fortunate members of these groups might be helped by relatives to gain a living or an education. A substantial amount of land was usually allotted to the communal family or clan for religious, educational, or charitable purposes by illustrious members of the family or clan. Nepotism was simply a projection of the family ideal of mutual help among the members. Clan nepotism often accounted for a man's rise on the social and economic ladder. This practice contributed to the upward movement of poorer segments of the population who otherwise might never have advanced socially and economically in a relatively short period of time.

The Scholar Ideal. Learing was much esteemed, especially when combined with wealth. The prestige of the wealthy was never complete until their wealth was adorned with culture. Indication of respect for learning was common in China, as typified by the saying: "Although your children may be of low intelligence, you as parents should make them study the Classics."[5]

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5. This stress on learning and cultivation of the Chinese was studied by Max Weber. In his Religion of China Weber goes so far as to conclude that this emphasis caused the lack of capital accumulation necessary for the development of modern capitalism in China. While this analysis may be over simple, it indicates how the traditional supremacy of officialdom over the merchant